Varieties of

Islamic Anarchism:

A Brief Introduction

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Al-'amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa nahy 'an al-munkar
You shall command the right and forbid the wrong.
Quran 3: 104

La 'ikraha fi al-din
There shall be no compulsion in religion.
Quran 2: 256

This final revised version touches up some details in the prior version (replaced dead links with new ones, updates, minor corrections, etc.) The text is loosely based on a speech (originally titled "Islam and anarchism") that I gave in Stockholm at the Anarchist Book Fair on June 16, 2012. I'd been working on a book about the topic for a number of years and was encouraged by one of the publishers to simply put out a ten-page booklet to serve as an introduction until I finished the book. After all, I'd already written a chapter on Islamic anarchism in the book *Religious Anarchism: New Perspectives* (2009) but it's expensive and unavailable at book fairs, libraries, etc. so a booklet seemed like a nice idea to reach out to non-academics, activists, and independent researchers. Although this short introduction only scratches the surface (and I plan to finish the book soon), this booklet can hopefully provide a general outline and impetus for further research. The purpose is not to advocate any particular type of Islam or anarchism but instead to help broaden our potential for understanding them or, if nothing else, their historical interaction and parallels. I don't self-identify as either Muslim or anarchist and I'm not an expert in the study of either Islam or anarchism. I would simply like to share what little I feel that I have learned. I know that as soon as I write, I'm bound to write something wrong or inaccurate so if you see something that you'd like to correct, add, or comment on then drop me a line (my first name [dot] last name @gmail.com). Many thanks to all who made this possible (including Gabriel Kuhn for copyediting and Mohamed Jean Veneuse for feedback).
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How shall one begin to discuss an interaction between two complex cultures or social phenomena, each with their own local variations, internal disputes, and challenges to their respective canons? Sometimes it can work well to start off at a spot close to home. In my case that would be the country I live in: Sweden. Though it may seem

like an unlikely place to begin talking about Islam and anarchism, if we go back to the 1800s, we'll see that Sweden happens to be the birthplace of the artist Ivan Aguéli, perhaps the first anarchist to convert to Islam. Born on May 24, 1869 (as John Gustaf Agelii) in a tiny town named Sala, he developed an early interest in philosophy, spirituality, ideology, and literature. From Dostoevsky to Tolstoy and from Nietzsche to Swedenborg, he explored new ideas ravenously. His curious mind carried him to France where he joined the Theosophical Society and then to London where he met the anarchist philosopher Peter Kropotkin in 1891. He began reading the Quran around 1892 and converted to Islam by 1897. Aguéli usually wrote about Islam and anarchism without connecting them to one another[1] such as when he publically advocated syndicalism[2]: "We have already received the solution of our generation. The union of individualism and solidarity… This union is called syndicalism and it is the only possible form of cooperation between socialism and anarchy." Yet there were occasionally moments of vague overlap in his Western and Eastern[3] paradigms such as when he wrote that one of his favorite thinkers "Ibn 'Arabi was a feminist," and, after shooting a matador in protest against animal abuse, defiantly told French authorities "My fatherland is the universe."

Born eight years after Aguéli there was another young anarchist who, fathered by a Russian acquaintance of anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, grew up in Geneva. Her name was Isabelle Eberhardt and her unconventional upbringing combined with a tomboy spirit which led to an early expression of "queer": She dressed as a male when she felt like it, lived nomadically, and, when she converted to Islam around 1896-97, took on a male name: Si Mahmoud Saadi (or Essadi). She moved to Algeria, joined a Sufi order, and pursued a lifestyle of purported promiscuity, journalism, smoking *kif* (hashish), and journeying across the North African desert by horse.

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[1] This dual identity in which the two parts seldom meet appears in others such as contemporary U.S. prison activist Ali Khalid Abdullah who self-identifies as both Muslim and anarchist and writes about both topics but rarely together.
[2] Syndicalism refers to a form of universal labor union aiming to replace capitalism by organizing through federation, worker-run production, and direct action.
[3] The distinctions "West" and "East" are very problematic –even fictitious– but are used (loosely) here for the sake of convenience and brevity.

Eberhardt challenged both Eastern and Western norms through her writings and praxis. In an article called *Age of the Void* published in 1900, she laid out a critique of modern society that seemed to foreshadow the anti-civilization perspective of anarcho-primitivists like John Zerzan. She wrote:

> Civilization, that great fraud of our times, has promised man that by complicating his existence it would multiply his pleasures… Civilization has promised man freedom, at the cost of giving up everything dear to him, which it arrogantly treated as lies and fantasies. …The superfluous has become a necessity and luxuries are indispensable.

Her determination to live her own life the way that she saw fit without much regard for the customs or norms of French, Swiss, Algerian, or Moroccan societies, was a testament to her vision of her uncompromising quest to experience life as deeply as she could imagine. She would likely have agreed with the sentiment expressed by contemporary Algerian feminist poet and singer Djura Abouda (b. 1952) in her 1986 song "Achal Im Di Nan Sver" (The Challenge):

> *If they ask you…*
> *To be silent*
> *To be patient a little longer…*
> *Just listen to your soul*
> *and act!*
>
> *Seize your rights,*
> *For nothing can stop*
> *The course of history.*
> *Your new-found strength will lead you*
> *To the fulfillment of your desires.*
>
> *…Your freedom?*
> *It lies in the reality*
> *Of your hopes,*
> *In the consequences of your actions,*
> *And in your will to survive,*
> *And to exist.*

Perhaps the most comprehensive study (in English at least) in regard to the early anarchist community's interaction with the Muslim world can be found in a 2010 book by Ilham Khuri-Makdisi (Northeastern University) where she describes how European anarchists

(predominantly Italians) organized within the Ottoman Empire. These interactions provided a larger context for people like Aguéli (who lived in Egypt for a while) and Eberhardt (who had corresponded with people in Egypt). In Alexandria alone there were approximately 12,000 Italians living and working (often in the building sector). By 1876 anarchists there had organized a branch of the syndicalist International Workers Association and in the early 1880s, Errico Malatesta and other Italian anarchists joined the 'Urabi uprising against the British (which was perhaps the first time that Muslims and anarchists fought a military campaign side by side). The uprising was however squashed. Malatesta was deported to Beirut while Britain occupied Egypt and consolidated control. Yet anarchists were less harassed there than in many other places in Europe and the Ottoman Empire. In 1901 anarchists co-founded a "free popular university," the Université Populaire Libré (UPL), in Alexandria. It was founded shortly after the first such university in the world (in France) and provided free courses (mostly in French and Italian but some in Arabic as well) on subjects like Tolstoy's and Bakunin's ideas, the arts, or pragmatic topics like worker negotiation strategies. While the UPL claimed to have attracted 15,000 people in its first two years, indigenous Muslims and Arabic speakers were quickly marginalized. Gradually anarchists and workers too lost control and were marginalized by an institution that became more aimed toward and controlled by upper class interests. Though the UPL did not survive, anarchist ideas continued to spread throughout the region. Even mainstream newspapers such as *al-Hilal* and *al-Muqtataf* (read in places like Cairo, Alexandria, and Beirut and written mostly by Syrians) began to publish anarchist-friendly articles including biographies of Pierre Proudhon and Elisée Reclus and, on occasion, entire issues devoted to people like Tolstoy and Emile Zola. Khuri-Makdisi wrote about the coverage style of these journals:

> One such tactic was to claim that both socialism and anarchism had existed in prior epochs and in different geographic or "civilizational" spaces; in other words, the periodicals searched for the roots of the two ideologies or comparable manifestations, in especially in the Arabo-Islamic past.

There is a largely unwritten history of early anarchist development in the Muslim world. For example, Shibli Shumayyil (1850-1917) from Cairo wrote perhaps the first pro-anarchist work in Arabic as early as 1898, yet beyond Khuri-Makdisi's book, he is hardly a well-known

figure and anarchism has only recently begun to resurface as a political concept in Egyptian discourse (thanks in part to thinkers like former Muslim Brotherhood associate Heba Raouf Ezzat and the newly formed Libertarian Socialist Movement in Egypt).[4] Who's to say how many Italian anarchists had been drawn to Islam or how many Muslims adopted anarchist ideas in the late 1800s and early 1900s? As Khuri-Makdisi wrote,

> What is evident, though, is that anarchism and anarchist ideas, in Egypt and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, far from being confined to marginal and minority groups, were gaining ground and being synthesized in other revolutionary radical or social movements, which included proto-nationalist, nationalist, trade unionist, and Muslim reformist movements.[5]

While the examples provided by Khuri-Makdisi and the lives of Aguéli and Eberhardt (along with other similar cases such as Leda Rafanelli and Gustave-Henri Jossot) may illustrate that anarchists and the Islamic world have had interaction for more than a century, they do not explain what ingredients have historically formed the basis for a potentially common "language" between Islam and anarchism: a language of resistance to oppression and skepticism to human authority but also commitment to egalitarianism, universalism, and solidarity. Iranian studies scholar at Columbia University, Hamid Dabashi (b. 1951), for example, speaks of an "Islamic Liberation Theology" that dismisses bin Laden as "senseless" and Tariq Ramadan as "reformist" and lifts up the examples of the revolutionary Babi movement of the 1800s, Malcolm X, and Ali Shariati's quest for a "just" and "classless" society. Even anti-clericalism is a common tenet amongst most Muslims and anarchists but is that enough to unite the two world-views?

The anarchist slogan of "No Gods, No Masters," seems to actually exclude the possibility of common ground with any religion. In fact,

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[4] Ezzat worked for a newspaper co-run by the Labor Party and the Brotherhood.

[5] As for Islamic socialism, many examples range from various state doctrines (Bhutto's PPP in Pakistan; Egypt's Nasserism, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, etc.) to Islamic socialist revolutionaries (Iranian Mujahedeen, Sultan Galiev in the Soviet revolution, al-Sibai, the founder of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood etc.), and protest movements ("Anti-Capitalist Muslims" in Turkey). See for example, Bennigsen and Wimbush 1985, Abrahamian 1989, and Gellner 2003. Also, the Islamic "communist" state of the Qarmatiyya ruled circa 899-1077 —more than twice as long as the USSR (see Crone 2004).

to most people, it would seem on the surface that (except for the fact that members of both groups have been stigmatized by Western governments and media as violent, anti-democratic and fanatical) there is absolutely no commonality between Islam and anarchism. After all, there is the well-known *hadith* (a saying by or about the Prophet Muhammad), "A thousand days of tyranny are better than a single night of anarchy." Yet this no more sums up the whole of Islamic tradition in regard to statelessness than Thomas Hobbes' chaotic "state of nature" sums up all Western views on anarchy. According to L. Carl Brown (Princeton), "the traditionalist Islamic attitude toward *actual* government (as opposed to… ideal government) is neatly summed up in the… dictum that the government that governs least governs best." The general discourse within the Islamic world took a sharp turn toward the right (i.e. literalism and radical conservatism) with the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the British and U.S.-backed Saudis in Arabia as custodians of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina. With the fall of the Caliphate in 1924, two new influential currents of Salafism began to spread: one typified by the Muslim Brotherhood (with social-democratic leanings) and the other typified by the Saudis (with monarchic leanings). Both emphasized scripture over legal schools/traditions and looked to the early Muslim community as a Golden Age and as a model for today's society. Even though both currents are socially conservative, they bear potentially emancipatory aspects: 1) The undermining of scholars' exclusive right to interpret scripture opens the door for lay people to read and interpret scripture on their own and; 2) The emphasis on Divine authority can imply undermining the legitimacy of the state, as in the case of Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb, for "to proclaim the authority and sovereignty of God means to eliminate all human kingship." Yet just as different people (including Qutb) may interpret the Quran in different ways, he too is now a figure to interpret in various ways.

Also, as Swedish Islamic scholar Jan Hjärpe pointed out in a well-cited article: Islam (as well as other traditions) can be understood as a sort of basket. Within the fold, one finds elements of quietism as well as activism, detached mysticism as well as pragmatic daily concerns. There are traditions of violence and non-violence, moderation and extremism. People (as well as local cultures) essentially pick and choose what will be emphasized at any given time. As Hjärpe wrote,

"From the basket is taken only that which has relevance in a given situation… It provides patterns of interpretation for what happens in one's personal life." Whether the philosophical ventures of Ibn Rushd or the strict interpretations of Ibn Taymiyya, there are innumerable figures in the history of Islam to whom one can refer to for any given point and there are numerous ways to interpret these figures. An example of interpretation and mobilization can be drawn from Ali (Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law). He engaged in non-violent conflict resolution through arbitration with Muawiyah, a competing claimant to the Caliphate. His example of arbitration can be referred to when one is in a situation that calls for peaceful means to resolving a conflict. Ali's son Husayn and his family however were slaughtered in the battle of Karbala and this story serves as a powerful motif for resistance and sacrifice when attempting to mobilize (Shiite) Muslims to more actively resist tyranny with insurrection (as they did during the 1979 revolution in Iran).

Similarly, the anarchist "tradition" has its own "basket". Here we can see pacifism[6] and terrorism, primitivism and syndicalism, nationalism[7] and anti-nationalism, collectivism and individualism.[8] Atheism has of course long been a part of the anarchist basket (via Bakunin, Emma Goldman and others) but then so has religiosity and mysticism (via Tolstoy, Gustav Landauer and others). Though the internal debates continue regarding what can *really* justifiably be called "anarchism," there is, as within Islam, no central authority within the anarchist tradition that can definitively settle the debate. People pick and choose from the basket while their peers judge.
A typical basis for anarchist assertions in an Islamic context is the fundamental tenet that appears in the Quran: "Serve none but God." This part of the Islamic basket can be and has been applied when the

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[6] Pacifist forms of anarchism are many but Tolstoy, Gandhi, Catholic Workers, and anarchist Quakers can be mentioned as prominent examples.
[7] Examples of nationalists in anarchist history include the (minority faction) of national syndicalists during the Spanish Civil war, the coining and development of the term "national anarchist" by Helmut Franke and Ernst Jünger, and contemporary groups such as the National Anarchist Tribal Alliance of New York and the Bay Area National Anarchists.
[8] Although the majority current of Western anarchists were socialist (such as Bakunin and Kropotkin), there were a number of individualist anarchist thinkers from the 1800s (such as Max Stirner and Josiah Warren) and in the 1900s thinkers like Murray Rothbard who espoused "anarcho-capitalism."

individual (or group) asserts its own independence from the laws of the state or rulers (who, even in Sunni tradition, have not been regarded as "rightly-guided" since the death of Ali).

Scholars have located certain groups within Islamic history whom they have characterized as anarchist. Princeton scholar Patricia Crone (1945-2015) wrote about the Najdiyya Kharijites and certain Mutazilites of the 9th century as anarchist in that they did not believe that a ruler was necessary for the Muslim community. The Kharijites in general were the group who (in contrast to those who later became identified as Sunni) opposed Muawiyah's claim to the Caliphate and (in contrast to the Shiites) opposed Ali's attempt at peaceful arbitration. "Let God be the judge," they declared and asserted that the battlefield was where God would separate the righteous from the corrupt. The Kharijites (of which the Najdiyya were one branch) continued as a separate tradition and were regarded as prone to violence and fanaticism by both Sunnis and Shiites. In fact the act of *takfir*, declaring that a Muslim is not a Muslim, is still associated with the Kharijites and regarded as unlawful. According to Crone however, the Najdiyya (within their own group) manifested a radical egalitarianism:

> All believers were entitled to their own opinions on law and doctrine on the basis of *ijtihad*, independent reasoning, for all of them were equally authoritative. … Najdite Islam was a do-it-yourself religion. Politically *and* intellectually, a Najdite would have no master apart from God.

Those who were outside their group, however, could be enslaved or killed.[9] Some of the Mutazilites, an ascetic circle of philosophers, arrived at similar conclusions but in a different manner. Among them were thinkers like Al-Asamm who believed that the problem of Imams degenerating into corrupt kingships could be resolved if they chose not to set them up in the first place. Instead, there could be various alternatives, including a decentralized federalist system in which power would be vested in the hands of local (male) leaders. In fact, similarly stateless systems of patriarchal organization are quite common throughout the Muslim world, from the Pashtun in the Swat territory in Pakistan/Afghanistan to the Bedouins of the Arabic

[9] This pattern of high ideals for *insiders* alongside the enslaving or killing of *outsiders* may bring to mind the Founding Fathers of the United States.

Peninsula or the Kabyle in Algeria (who were discussed by Peter Kropotkin in *Mutual Aid*). Another scholar Ahmet Karamustafa (University of Maryland) has located anarchist tendencies in some of the dervish groups of the Middle Ages. Many of these groups were reacting to the institutionalization (i.e., co-optation) of mainstream Sufism. One group, the Madaris of India, refused to wear clothes except for black turbans. In a vague foreshadowing of certain anarcho-crust punks or some Rastas of today, members carried black banners, wore dreadlocks, smoked lots of hash, and systematically breached traditional taboos. Likewise, many of the Qalandariyya had body piercings and tattoos in explicit defiance of Islamic traditions that regarded such practices as *haram* (forbidden). In a legend recounted by anthropologist Tord Olsson via Mehmet Selim, one of the early dervishes of the Malamatiyya was once being followed by a crowd of admirers. In reaction to their praise, he paused, extracted his penis, and urinated on the ground (much to their horror). Rejection of society included rejection of its values (such as pride). Many of these groups chose voluntary poverty and nomadism as a lifestyle. Karamustafa described their "individualist anarchism" as an "active nihilism targeted directly at society." In reference to their total rejection of civilization, he cited one dervish leader, Otman Baba, as saying, in effect, that "money is shit" (similar to the anarchist Pierre Proudhon's famous declaration that "property is theft").

In the Western anarchist community, this research inadvertently led, in 2004, to perhaps the first public debate in the anarchist tradition as to which Muslims could rightly be considered anarchist. On the pages of the anarchist journal *Fifth Estate*, Harold Barclay (1924-2017), an anarchist anthropologist and author of *People Without Government*, cited Crone's research and the Najdiyya as anarchist while critiquing the dervishes for submitting themselves to a master (*sheikh*). Peter Lamborn Wilson (b. 1945), self-identifying Sufi and author of *Sacred Drift*, replied that, "political structure is not everything. The Lawless dervishes may still have a guru… but they lead free lives (or so it appeared to me). The Kharijites may not have a guru but they live like Cromwellian dragoons." Elsewhere Wilson has lifted up the example of the Assassins during the reign of Hassan-i Sabbah (and specifically under Hassan II) as an early form of syndicalism and insurrectionary anarchist praxis.

Then, at the same time, there have been modern manifestations of anarchist praxis in Muslim contexts (i.e., Somalia's statelessness 1999-2006 in which the Internet developed as effectively there as in neighboring Kenya) as well as anarchist theory by prominent Muslims (i.e., Qaddafi's *Green Book* advocated a society based on socialism and direct democracy).[10] It seems, however, that only within the last twenty or thirty years have there arisen individuals who have explicitly and publically self-identified as Muslim anarchists. Some of them, such as Abdennur Prado (Spain) and Mohamed Jean Veneuse (Canada) have written their own exegetical analyses in books that explain how Islam and anarchism fit together (*El Islam como Anarquismo Místico* and *Anarca-Islam* respectively). Citing al-Ráziq, Prado said the original community of the Prophet could be seen as a form of anarchism. Veneuse, invoking "Anarchic-Ijtihad," takes traditional Islamic concepts such as *ijma* (consensus), *shura* (consultation), and *maslaha* (public interest) to describe a democratic, egalitarian, and anti-state current within Islam. Writing about the classical criterion for the election of Caliphs, Veneuse wrote: "First, that Muslims participate in the decision-making process of choosing. Second, choosing without being coerced by any means, measure or standard. Last, Muslims must possess all the 'facts' with respect to the field of candidates or representatives from which they are to select." Similarly, Veneuse sees the ban on *riba* (usury/interest) as an example of an anti-capitalist current within Islam. Yet not all of those who see parallels between Islam and anarchism are anti-capitalist. More in line with the philosophy of Rothbard, M. Zuhdi Jasser gave a speech entitled "The Synergy of Libertarianism and Islam" in 2005 where he said:

[10] Though Barclay, in his 2002 article "Islam, Muslim Societies and Anarchy," dismissed Qaddafi on account of his authoritarian praxis, this does not mean that the central idea espoused in the *Green Book* is not anarchistic in itself. Nor does sincerity constitute a litmus test for an idea's legitimacy: even if Galileo said he was joking, the solar system would not be less heliocentric as a result. Hence, the basic stance of the *Green Book* is anarchistic because it calls for a society in which "government administration is abolished" and replaced with a "direct democracy" that organizes syndicates, associations, and local people's committees in a national federation. In the end, despite Qaddafi's increasingly close cooperation with the West (from weapons deals to the torture of terror suspects), NATO (backed by dictatorships like Saudi Arabia and Qatar) invaded Libya by air and put an end to his regime and life in 2011.

> In the Quran, God tells Muslims –"If I so desired I could have forced you to believe, but I did not." Thus to believe in God and his faith is to believe an individual's choice is his or hers alone and must be free of coercion or else the entire faith is abrogated and irreconcilable. …ultimate acceptance and governance is still divinely individual –in point of fact libertarian. …While much of the Quran is rules, the acceptance of them is individual and is to be left inviolable by society.

In fact, as it may perhaps be obvious by now, the very *interpretation* of the rules has become an individual process (much to the dismay of those scholars in the various traditional schools of Islamic thought). Former anarchist Ian Dallas founded the neo-Sufi group Murabitun and graphic designer Soofiya realized that Islam fit in well with her anarcha-feminism when she discovered London's Inclusive Mosque Initiative. Though the individualization of this phenomenon has accelerated in recent times, its roots stretch deep into Islamic history and the poet Rumi and the mystic-philosopher Ibn 'Arabi are glowing examples of the way that Islam can be used to resist Islamic *tradition*. "Out beyond ideas of right and wrong, there is a field," Rumi wrote, "I'll meet you there." Ibn 'Arabi (a favorite of anarchists such as Wilson and the Swedish Sufi syndicalist Torbjörn Säfve) wrote that, "If men knew themselves, they would know God," as he drew upon a mix of scripture and personal revelation (activities which led to his execution for heresy in the year 1240).

In 2003 there was an announcement of the formation in a small town in southern Spain of a group of anarcho-syndicalist Muslims named Asociación Islámica-Libertaria Internacional (AILI). The same year, Michael Muhammad Knight self-published the fictional novel *The Taqwacores* and helped inspire a small scene of "taqwacore" punks to connect together.[11] The diversity, inclusiveness, and antinomian nature of the scene was a sharp contrast to the vegan straight edge-inspired moralism that characterized "hardline," a militant scene that developed in the 1990s and drew on currents in Shiism, Taoism, Rastafarianism, anarchism, martial arts, the MOVE organization, and the Nation of Islam. Taliyah al-Mahdi (Vanguard of the Messiah) was a loose millenarian group in that scene (which included rapper Naj

[11] "Taqwacore" bands include the Kominas, al-Thawra, and Atari Creed. Knight once identified as Five Percenter and said their response to the anarchist slogan of "No Gods, No Masters" would be "*I* God, *I* Master" (like the Nation of Islam, they say the Black man is God: ALLAH = Arm, Leg, Leg, Arm, Head).

One and hardline founder Sean Muttaqi of Vegan Reich). Taliyah al-Mahdi, perhaps the first modern group of Muslim anarchists, faded out of existence about the same time that Knight published *The Taqwacores* (later made into a feature film and a documentary).

There are also a number of non-Islamic anarchist organizations in predominantly Muslim countries (Egypt, Lebanon, etc.) while some of them (such as in Jordan or Indonesia) also have members who identify as religious or "Sufi." In general, too little research has been done to be able to speak generally about these scenes. Subsequently, the following diagram is far from presenting an accurate picture. Yet, like a crude map with plenty of errors, it may nonetheless provide a general orientation to facilitate exploration (Fig. 1).

The diagram charts two variables for varieties of Islamic anarchism:
1) Various views on economic order (such as socialism/syndicalism; capitalism; a mix between the two or a third path such as mutualism; small-scale economy, monastic "anti-economies;" various blends or those who take no stance on the matter) and,
2) Various views on how to organize individuals in society (through moralistic mutual policing; following antinomian sheikhs; individualism; or some type of blend).

The purpose is to visually demonstrate some contrasts between a range of ideas and/or practices that could potentially be regarded as "Islamic anarchism." The terms "Islamic" and "anarchism" are furthermore used very loosely here. "Anarchism" here ranges from syndicalism to anti-authoritarianism to minarchism (minimal state) while "Islamic" includes all those who have a discursive relationship to some part of the broad historical current of Islam including its heresies and deviants (note: one Muslim's heretic is another Muslim's saint). The fact that the *Green Book* by Muammar Qaddafi (1942-2011) is placed in the same category as Shariati (1933-1977) does not mean that these thinkers have very much in common (except two respects: 1) socialism and 2) a syncretic blend of individual and societal needs). In fact, they are quite different. Shariati's general ideological views regarding the state were probably closer to Heba Raouf Ezzat than either Qaddafi or Sayyid Qutb. So the full range of variety is actually far greater than the 20 "types" provided. Given that individuals and groups often change their ideas and practices (which

are often not even in sync with one another), categorization can be a problematic endeavor. Thus, the categories and examples here are not set in stone and there is no claim to genuine accuracy. The point instead is to argue that the sheer complexity and range of possibilities here demonstrate that we are currently ill-equipped to understand and grasp the actual diversity that appears in real life. As we become more aware of (and affected by) cultures outside of our own and as we discover new evolving subcultures, we may need to dramatically overhaul our conceptual tools for understanding the world around us. It is, of course, easier to make broad sweeping categories based on a small category of "Correct" teachings (which we ourselves belong to) versus a large group of "False" teachings (which everyone who disagrees with us belongs to) but such oversimplifications are better suited for the battlefield (if even that) than the academy: they don't help us understand much at all. That said, this diagram is also a gross simplification as issues such as feminism, queer, nationalism, pacifism,[12] and primitivism are not included. In several cases, different schools of thought are lumped together for convenience. On the other hand, a distinction between "antinomian" and "individualist" seems important: Islamic antinomianism is based on the explicit challenge of social and religious norms (while doing so in a context that legitimates master-disciple relationships) while individualism is detached from *all* traditional bonds (including the master-disciple relationship) and does not necessarily challenge norms (although it claims the right to). Finally, many of the groups or individuals listed here do not self-identify as anarchist per se. Their inclusion here is because they have either a) drawn from anarchist theory; b) manifested a form of anarchistic praxis; c) been described as "anarchist" by scholars; or d) written a text that can easily be read as anti-state and/or espousing a classless doctrine.[13]

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[12] There are, for example, a number of prominent Muslim pacifists (such as Abdul Ghaffar Khan, see Raqib 2009) but the extent to which they drew anarchist conclusions from their pacifism (as Tolstoy and Gandhi did) has not yet been explored by any researcher that I am aware of.

[13] "Classless" here is meant to exclude any form of ruling class (including "dictatorship" of the proletariat in which groups such as travelers, farmers, service workers, scavengers, and others may be disenfranchised if they don't qualify as "real" workers). This definition of "classless" seems close to Shariati's stance that, if nothing else, was clearly anti-authoritarian.

Fig. 1 Varieties of Islamic Anarchism

	Individual-Society Stance				
Economic Stance		*Moralist*	*Antinomian*	*Individualist*	*Syncretic*
	Socialist or Syndicalist	Taliyah al-Mahdi (?)	The Babis (?)	Ivan Aguéli Leda Rafanelli Peter Lamborn Wilson	Ali Shariati *Green Book* Mohamed Jean Veneuse
	Capitalist or Neo-liberal			M. Zuhdi Jasser	
	Social-Democrat, Third Way, or Mutualist	Sayyid Qutb			Heba Raouf Ezzat
	Small-Scale or Anti-Economy		The Madaris Qalandariyya Isabelle Eberhardt		
	Syncretic or No Stance	Najdiyya (?) al-Asamm (?)	Assassins (?)		Five Percenters Tahrir Square *Taqwacores* (book)

The above diagram should not be read to imply a large degree of commonality on many issues but what it ought to display is the fact that there is a huge range of both diversity and overlap of ways in which self-identifying Muslims challenge the idea of the state. In some cases, they have been in contact with one another (such as Knight's contact with Wilson) but in many cases, they are neither in contact with one another nor aware of one another. There is currently no "Muslim anarchist scene" (much less movement). Their meeting, to the extent that it takes place is largely on the Internet or in literature (like this). While the U.S.-based Jesus Radicals have organized annual conferences, gathering Christian anarchists to meet, discuss, and network for ten years in a row, there has, so far, been no similar organization or meeting ground for Muslim anarchists. Interestingly, the biggest physical meeting space which included some Muslim anarchists was a public square in Egypt in 2011 that functioned as a center for revolution primarily for non-anarchists who

used anarchist methods (yet included groups like Egypt's Black Flag). As sociologist Mohammed Bamyeh (Pittsburgh) wrote about Tahrir Square in 2011:

> Thus in these revolutionary experiments we encounter a rare combination of an anarchist method and a liberal intention: the revolutionary style is anarchist, in the sense that it requires little organization, leadership, or even coordination; tends to be suspicious of parties and hierarchies even after revolutionary success; and relies on spontaneity, minimal planning, local initiative, and individual will much more than on any other factors. On the other hand, the explicit goal of all Arab revolutions is the establishment of a liberal state—explicitly, a civic state– not an anarchist society.

Nonetheless, there have been some anarchists (even Muslim anarchists) who have participated in the Arab Uprisings. More basic here has simply been the demonstration of the very existence of various individuals and historical currents that have been identified or self-identify as both anarchist and Muslim. In conclusion, I'd simply like to cite a scholar, Muslim, and anarchist by the name of Seth 'Abd al-Hakeem Carney who wrote that "Islamic law does not provide sufficient bases for legitimizing coercive state power, and that the only alternative for Muslims seeking to 'implement Islam' in the political realm is a turn towards a libertarian movement that does not use the state and its apparatuses for creating justice and imposing piety." In another paper Carney provided a quote by Ali:

> *Your sickness is within you, though you do not realize,*
> *And your cure is within you, yet you do not see.*
> *You claim that you are nothing but a tiny entity,*
> *Yet wrapped up inside of you is the greatest universe.*
> *You are the clear book, through whose letters*
> *All that is secret is revealed and made known.*
> *So you have no need of anything outside of you…*

Whether any of this amounts to *true* Islam or is *really* anarchist is not the question here. My goal here has merely been to try to understand and describe some things in the baskets. In the end, the reader decides what to pull out of all this and then, if anything, what to do with it.

> *Conceivably, the classical liberal ideals …in their libertarian socialist form are achievable. But if so, only by a popular revolutionary movement, rooted in a wide strata of the population and committed to the elimination of repressive and authoritarian institutions, state and private.*
> - Noam Chomsky

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Web sites:

Anarchists in largely Muslim countries

www.anarkismo.net/article/19666 (Egypt's Libertarian Socialist Movement)
www.struggle.ws/africa/aware.html (Anarchist Awareness League in Nigeria)
www.anarkismo.net/article/22396 (Interview w/ Kurdish Anarchist Forum)
http://ypg-international.org & www.supportrojava.org (Kurdish Revolution in Rojava)
http://anarchism-jordan.blogspot.se (Jordanian anarchists)
http://razorcake.org/one-punks-travel-guide-indonesia-kevin-dunn/ and
https://anarkonesia.wordpress.com/ (Punk and anarchism in Indonesia)
http://libcom.org/library/anarchism-indonesia (Interview with Indonesian anarchist)
https://libcom.org/tags/basf (Bangladesh Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation)
www.anarkismo.net/article/19880 (Interview with Malaysian anarchists)
http://anarchiststudies.org/2013/07/19/ (Palestinian Anarchists in Conversation)
http://nefac.net/node/2541 (Interview with Nidal Tahrir from Black Flag in Egypt)
http://nefac.net/node/1731 (Interview with an Iranian anarchist)

General info, resources, and wiki

http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/mohamed-jean-veneuse-anarca-islam.pdf (*Anarca-Islam* 2009, Mohamed Jean Veneuse)
https://tahriricn.wordpress.com (Tahrir ICN Anarchist news in Muslim regions)
http://www.islamicpluralism.org/documents/islam-communism.pdf (Free book on Islam and Communism by Stephen Suleyman Schwartz 2009)
http://thesalafifeminist.blogspot.com/ (The Salafi Feminist)
http://anarchisminarabic.blogspot.se (Anarchist ideas in Arabic)
https://docafg.com (Documenting Afghanistan)
http://www.mangalmedia.net/ (Mangal Media – Decolonizing media)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchism_and_Islam (Wikipedia's ever-evolving page on Islam and Anarchism)

Music, cartoons, articles, and blogs

http://www.labourofloveandhate.com (blog/photos on metal and HC punk in SE Asia)
https://kominas.bandcamp.com/ (The Kominas)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWMGBlvzYi0 (Jakarta Punk trailer —Marjinal)
www.ahewar.org/m.asp?i=1385 (Syrian anarchist blog in Arabic)
http://she2i2.blogspot.se (Jano Charbel's anarchist blog from Cairo)
http://themuslimanarchist.wordpress.com (London-based Salafi anarchist)
http://bayareaintifada.wordpress.com (Bay Area Intifada Libertarian Socialist)
http://www.muslims4liberty.org/anarchy-and-islam/ (Davi Barker/Anarcho-capitalists)
https://countervortex.org//node/2151 (Sufism & Struggle Within Islam by Khazari-El)
https://www.soofiya.com (Soofiya, "Anarchist, Feminist, Muslim" & graphic designer)
https://www.cartoonmovement.com/p/5899 (Doaa el-Adl, antiauthoritarian cartoonist)

"Progressive" Islams

www.universalistmuslims.org twitter.com/UniversMuslims (Universalist Muslims)
www.ibnarabisociety.org (Ibn 'Arabi Society)
http://inclusivemosqueinitiative.org/ (Inclusive Mosque Initiative in UK)
http://www.tlaxcala-int.org/article.asp?reference=16376 and
https://www.mashallahnews.com/the-anti-capitalist-iftar/ (Anti-Capitalist Muslims in Turkey)
www.shariati.com (Ali Shariati, Iranian socialist)
www.alfikra.org (Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, Sudanese activist– Click for English)
www.rawa.org (Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan)

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